

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: April 28, 2020
Time: 10:00am
Via Zoom Meeting

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie. Others in participating: Jeremia Pollard, Kathleen McGowan, Stephen Cohen, Jennifer Howard, Lesliann Furcht, Mary McGurn, Evan Triantafilidis(Berkshire Record), Juliette Haas, Bruce Bersntein, Laura Allen, Chuck Ogden.

A moment of silence was held for Stanley Farnum and Helen Krancer.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

Chairman McGurn read the following:

Good (morning, afternoon, evening,), it's TIME and I'd like to open the DATE COMMITTEE/BOARD NAME meeting. This meeting is being held virtually through Zoom.

The Town of Egremont began conducting remote participation/Zoom meetings pursuant to Governor Baker's emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" on March 19, 2020.

Before beginning a today, I want to confirm how we assure your equal access to our Zoom meetings:

- Participants signing into meetings will be held in a waiting room until the host verified identities.
- Once admitted, participants' microphones are muted by default on desktop. If you call into the meeting by cell phone, tap *(star) 6 to mute. When you wish to speak either click the microphone icon on the desktop, or tap *(star) 6 again. When finished speaking, please mute.
- To be recognized by the Chairman to speak, use the raise hand function. On desktop, you'll find it by clicking on Participants at the bottom center of your screen, then clicking on the Raise Hand button. To lower, click the same button. If you used your cell phone, tap *(star) 9 to activate the function. Tap same again to lower hand.
- The host will notify the Chairman of raised hands. When the Chairman recognizes a raised hand, unmute your microphone and then state your name and address. Remember to mute yourself when done.

BOS Zoom meeting will not be using the chat function going forward. Using the Raise Hand function will improve real-time participation and the Chairman's ability to recognize you

MINUTES:

The minutes of the April 14 and April 21 meetings were accepted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) representative Jennifer Howard presented details regarding DCR's intent to purchase a parcel of land abutting the Jug End Reservation that DCR already owns. The Board announced that DCR intends to purchase a parcel of land abutting the Jug End Reservation. The Board voted unanimously to waive the 120 waiting period.

The National Guard was at Town Hall in a large army truck delivering two thermometers in response to the request for 4.

The Board approved a temporary special permit as allowed under Egremont Zoning Bylaw 4.3.4.2 to allow Kathleen McGowan to have a travel trailer or mobile home for temporary living quarters while they build their home 191 Jug End Road. The special permit is issued for May 1, 2020 to November 1, 2020.

Aretha Whitehead asked the Board via email if the Town was interested in keeping the French Park gardens going this year. Greenagers will supply the seedlings and install them using proper safety guidelines and practices. Apprentices will be helping to maintain the gardens over the summer. This will be the second year of the gardens, and though they were not fully utilized last year and there was some instances of theft, the Board wholeheartedly endorsed the gardens being planted again.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Mobility Manager job description just awaits final review. Stephen Goodman who had originally volunteered to take on this position has withdrawn his interest due to time constraints.

Legal Counsel Jeremia Pollard informed the Board that Annual Town Meeting cannot take place remotely. He feels his town's will begin to hold their town meetings in June but is unsure how they will conform to the social distancing and gathering limits imposed by the states COVID19 guidelines. The Board voted unanimously to schedule the Town Meeting for Tuesday, June 23. The Board began discussion of venues, to include the auditorium at the high school, French Park under tents, and the Town Hall parking lot.

At 10am Zoom crashed so the Board could not continue its meeting. Chairman McGurn and Selectperson Brazie voted via phone to recess the meeting and regroup.

The meeting resumed via Zoom on Thursday, April 30 at 9am. Others participating were Juliette Haas, Mary McGurn, Charles Ogden, Steve Cohen, Bruce Bernstein and Laura Allen.

Discussion continued on venues for the June 23 Annual Town Meeting. The School has been contacted to ascertain the number of seats available and how the auditorium is sanitized after use. The Town Hall parking lot is not a viable option as the large tent needed would leave no room for parking cars. The estimated costs to hold the Town Meeting at French Park with a large tent, lights and a PA system are approaching \$10,000. Vice-chairman Vermuelen said she will not vote for the expenditures due to the unexpected expenses to hold the meeting at French Park. A location does not need to be established until the first week of June. The warrant will need to be posted on June 8. It was agreed that the budget will be posted approximately May 12 when the Finance Committee has had the opportunity to meet.

The contract for services with Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation (SBETC) needs to be signed by May 15. Bruce Bernstein feels it may even be accepted as late as May 30. The contract will not be signed until the last moment. There are currently no other options for reliable transportation. The Town of Sheffield is transporting Egremont residents while SBETC is closed during the COVID19 pandemic. There are also volunteer drivers helping. Chairman McGurn and Council on Aging Chairman Bernstein will discuss possible options.

Bruce Bernstein will pursue the Working Forests Initiative.

The Board adopted the following executive order that will be sent to all town officials:
"No town officials, board or committee members, shall access town hall at any time until such time as the Board lifts this executive order."

Because of an incident in the horse back riding ring at French Park over the past weekend, the riding ring will be closed like over areas of the park are. A cease and desist order will be sent to the persons who were using the ring to give private riding lessons to children.

The Fire Department is tracking the use of the PPE obtained from MEMA.

Board of Health Director Juliette Haas reported that Egremont has no new cases of COVID19 and Berkshire County is the safest area of the state.

FOLLOW UPS/UPDATES:

The School District Consolidation Planning Committee meet during the week via zoom. It was a productive and well attended meeting. Minutes from the prior meeting will be sent to the Town soon.

The response from MassBroadband Institute (MBI) to the Boards letter suggests that a decision will be made soon on the funding for FiberConnect to complete its build out to all residents in Egremont.

Emerald River LLC has asked to be placed on the next Board meeting agenda to obtain permission to hold a remote outreach meeting. The Cannabis Control Commission has authorized such meetings. Emerald River LLC still does not have a verified location for its proposed retail marijuana shop.

Selectman Brazie asked if planning was ongoing for the August 16 Town Birthday celebration. Barbara Kalish is in charge. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen will follow up with Barbara.

The Affordable Housing Committee recently met with June Wolfe from Construct to talk about options for our Affordable Housing Project.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Memorial Day Parade will not take place. Instead a private, closed to the public, ceremony will be conducted by the VFW to remember the fallen soldiers.

FY 21 BUDGET/TOWN MEETING REVIEW:

The Board approved an amended Computer Expenses budget that dropped from \$105,130 to \$100,590.

The Board voted unanimously to remove from the Annual Town Meeting warrant the \$200,000 request for engineering funds for Mount Washington Road and the 6% optional sales tax on short-term rentals. These two items may be placed on a future Special Town Meeting warrant.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05am.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.20/apr28

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.